

Apostasy

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Summary: A short vignette on the thoughts running through Rufus Shinra's head on the night of his father's death.

Apostasy

_ "Reject the world you knew before, or you can never make it."

_

Apostasy, by Mary Bennings

It looms above the Mako Metropolis like a monolith, an ominous presence. Few enter there, and few ever get out.

He had been one of the lucky ones. Though not by his own choosing, however, but he had still gotten out.

The helicopter dipped sharply, jerking the young man out of his reflections. "Sorry sir!" Tseng apologized. "We're coming into some turbulence over Midgar. We should get through it shortly, however."

Rufus nodded, unperturbed. "Proceed with caution then."

"Yes sir."

He could already see it in the distance, the impenetrable fortress that was the Shinra Incorporated Headquarters. A cold, sterile building, it could not rightly be called a home, yet he had once lived there. But he had given up on such foolish notions a long time ago. He had not been an ordinary child, but one born for the sole sake of inheriting his father's company. It was not an existence he would wish upon another.

Ah well. The old man had gotten his way with him in the end. He had not been a son, but a business partner- the one who would one day

succeed him.

He inwardly smirked. Treize Shinra had not intended to have been succeeded so soon, just as his predecessor had not anticipated to have passed on so quickly. It was a grim prophecy, how all the Shinra men died young, entombed within the walls of their own company. But...his grip on the seat tightened. It may have happened to his paternal relatives, but he'd be damned if it happened to him.

After all, he was Rufus Shinra. The most powerful man in the world. The only other one who could have challenged that had gone to the "big Mako reactor in the sky".

It was his turn now. He would run things his way, not his father's. Not by the wallet, but the whip. If his time in Junon had taught him anything, it was that a little fear could control anyone. A sharp word or threat from someone in a position of power could control those pathetic underlings and keep them in line. Soon Midgar, nay, the world, would know their place. And it had been his father who had began his teachings on such things, though Treize had never practiced what he preached. A pity, though it worked to Rufus' advantage. Treize had preferred to work through money and those corrupt imbeciles he'd called executives.

The Shinra Headquarters was quickly growing closer. He was feeling an acute sense of dread, but ignored it. He had been forewarned that Treize's death had been a bloody one, to say the least, yet had not been informed as to who the culprit was. It didn't matter so much as long as he got his presidency and didn't end up the same way as his father.

"Approaching the HQ, sir." Tseng spoke up. "Shall I land the chopper?"

"Yes." He glanced out the window, mildly surprised to see Palmer running in chaotic circles on the roof. For a large, oafish man, he was moving fast.

The helicopter descended. Palmer began jumping up and down as soon as Rufus stepped out. "It was Sephiroth! I saw Sephiroth! An' he said some stuff too! A lot of stuff!"

He raised an eyebrow. "Stuff?"

"Yeah! He said stuff like, um... about not letting us have the Promised Land. An' AVALANCHE is here too!"

Rufus smiled darkly. The man was barely coherent and was smelled strongly of a narcotic he couldn't quite identify yet. At least he could humor him. "Sephiroth, did you say?"

"That's what I said! It was Sephiroth! He said Shinra's not getting the Promised Land."

The Promised Land. No matter whether Palmer had actually witnessed Sephiroth murdering Treize or had merely seen it in a drug induced hallucination, the threat of loosing the Promised Land did not scare him. It would be his, regardless.

"AVALANCHE? AVALANCHE was here?"

"Yeah!" Palmer exclaimed, excited. "They tried to steal the Ancient!"

"Hmm." While it was remotely possible that Sephiroth had killed his father, he did have the obvious handicap of being dead. Killed by some grunt in the lower ranks of SOLDIER, who was more than slightly miffed that the general had torched his hometown. He remembered it well, even though the incident had happened five years ago. Of course, the "_official_" reports told to the media had been much different than what the Shinra executives knew. The truth? Of course not. The public couldn't handle it. It would have caused a panic.

He doubted it was Sephiroth, for the obvious reasons. But AVALANCHE... He ran a hand through his hair, thinking. A rebel force in Midgar, he'd heard little of them in Junon. A ruthless group, determined on bringing down the company by ridiculous means. Was it possible they had been the ones truly responsible?

Rufus brushed past the gibbering Palmer, and started down the stairs. "Sir?" Tseng peeked out of the helicopter. "Do you want me to accompany you?"

He cringed with resentment. Was he a child who still needed to remain under the watchful eye of a babysitter? No. "I'd rather be by myself."

Tseng shrugged, and ducked back into the helicopter, lighting up a cigarette.

Rufus continued down the stairs into the darkened office. The silence was deafening.

So ends this chapter of the Shinra legacy.

Treize had been brutally pierced by the massive sword and left facedown on his desk, drowning in crimson blood. He calmly neared the desk, examining the demon's blade. Really, he should have felt grieved, perhaps reeling from the loss of his only surviving parent. But he felt nothing. It wasn't the Shinra way, after all.

_Your time is up, old man. _

So...Palmer had been right. It was Sephiroth. The only one capable of wielding the sword. The Masamune. It was finely crafted, nearly seven feet in length. The hilt was designed with such expertise that it would rival that of the most skilled of artisans. His hand tightened around the blade, feeling the cold metal, then pulled it up by the hilt, freeing the mortal remains of Treize Shinra. It clattered to floor, disrupting his silence.

This would be his vow, his newfound apostasy. A soldier followed his orders. He would end this. Sephiroth, AVALANCHE...anyone who opposed them...they would fall. Shinra, Incorporated would rule supreme.

And the Promised Land would be theirs. Even though he did not believe in happiness, let alone that bestowed ultimate bliss upon its finders.

He turned, and continued back up from the office. Treize had slipped up. He would not do the same. It was his chance now, the young man had finally ascended to presidency. After all, it had been the point of his very existence to continue in this predetermined destiny.

Still...he could not shake that dark prophesy. And there would be no escape from his. Those words, they would haunt him until the day he died. To love and to have lost... He had lost once, but not gained the other, and doubted he ever could.

_You're running on borrowed time, Rufus Shinra... _

4/6/00

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